

THE DRINK QUESTION

REV. DR. TALMAGE PREACHES ON
THE THREE TAVERNS.

He Discusses the Dissipations of the Day
and Eulogizes the Great Reformers of
the Past and Present—Tribute to Neal
Dow.

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 17.—In a unique way Dr. Talmage here discusses the dissipations of the day and eulogizes the great reformers of the past and present. His text is Acts xviii, 15, "They came to meet us as far as Appii forum and the three taverns."

Seventeen miles south of Rome there was a village of unfortunate name. A tavern is a place of entertainment, and in our time part of the entertainment is a provision of intoxicants. One such place you would think would have been enough for that Italian village. No! There were three of them, with doors open for entertainment and obfuscation. The world has never lacked stimulating drinks. You remember the condition of Noah on one occasion, and of Abigail's husband, Nabal, and the story of Belshazzar's feast, and Benhadad and the new wine in old bottles, and whole paragraphs on prohibition enactment thousands of years before Neal Dow was born, and no doubt there were whole shelves of inflammatory liquid in those hotels which gave the name to the village where Paul's friends came to meet him—namely, the Three Taverns. In vain I search ancient geography for some satisfying account of that village. Two roads came from the seacoast to that place, the one from Actium and the other from Puteoli, the last road being the one which Paul traveled. There were no doubt in that village houses of merchandise and mechanics' shops and professional offices, but nothing is known of them. All we know of that village is that it had a profusion of inns—the three taverns. Paul did not choose any one of these taverns as the place to meet his friends. He certainly was very abstemious, but they made the selection. He had enlarged about keeping the body under, though once he prescribed for a young theological student a stimulating cordial for a stomachic disorder, but he told him to take only a small dose—"a little wine for thy stomach's sake."

The Three Taverns.

One of the worst things about these three taverns was that they had especial temptation for those who had just come ashore. People who had just landed at Actium or Puteoli were soon tempted by these three hotels which were only a little way up from the beach. Those who are disordered of the sea (for it is a physical disorganizer), instead of waiting for the gradual return of physical equipoise, are apt to take artificial means to brace up. Of the 1,000,000 sailors now on the sea, how few of them coming ashore will escape the three taverns! After surviving hurricanes, cyclones, icebergs, collisions, many of them are wrecked in harbor. I warrant that if a calculation were made of the comparative number of sailors lost at sea and lost ashore those drowned by the crimson wave of dissipation would far outnumber those drowned by the salt water.

Alas, that the large majority of those who go down to the sea in ships should have twice to pass the three taverns—namely, before they go out and after they come in! That fact was what aroused Father Taylor, the great sailor's preacher, at the Sailors' Bethel, Boston, and at a public meeting at Charleston, he said, "All the machinery of the drunkard making, soul destroying business is in perfect running order, from the low grog holes on the docks kept open to ruin my poor sailor boys to the great establishments in Still House square, and when we ask men what is to be done about it they say, 'You can't help it,' and yet there is Bunker Hill, and you say you can't stop it, and up there are Lexington and Concord." We might answer Father Taylor's remark by saying, "The trouble is not that we can't stop it, but that we won't stop it." We must have more generations slain before the world will fully wake up to the evil. That which tempted the travelers of old who came up from the seaports of Actium and Puteoli is now the ruin of seafaring men as they come up from the coasts of all the continents—namely, the three taverns. In the autumn, about this time, in the year 1887, the steamship Home went out from New York for Charleston. There were about 100 passengers, some of them widely known. Some of them had been summering at the northern watering places, and they were on their way south, all expectant of hearty greeting by their friends on the wharfs of Charleston. But a little more than two days out the ship struck the rocks. A lifeboat was launched, but sank with all its passengers. A mother was seen standing on the deck of the steamer with her child in her arms. A wave wrenched the child from the mother's arms and rolled it into the sea, and the mother leaped after it.

The sailors rushed to the bar of the boat and drank themselves drunk. Ninety-five human beings went down never to rise or to be floated upon the beach amid the fragments of the wreck. What was the cause of the disaster? A drunken sea captain. But not until the judgment day, when the sea shall give up its dead, and the story of earthly disasters shall be fully told, will it be known how many yachts, steamers, brigantines, men-of-war and ocean grey hounds have been lost through captain and crew made incompetent by alcoholic dethronement. Admiral Farragut had proper appreciation of what the fiery stimulus was to a man in the navy. An officer of the warship said to him: "Admiral, won't you consent to give Jack a glass of grog in the morning? Not enough to make him drunk, but enough to make him fight cheerfully." The ad-

miral answered: "I have been to sea considerably and have seen a battle or two, but I never found that I needed rum to enable me to do my duty. I will order two cups of coffee to each man at 2 o'clock in the morning, and at 8 o'clock I will pipe all hands to breakfast in Mobile bay."

The three taverns of my text were too near the Mediterranean shipping.

An Overdone Business.

But notice the multiplicity. What could that Italian village, so small that history makes but one mention of it, want with more than one tavern? There were not enough travelers coming through that insignificant town to support more than one house of lodgment. That would have furnished enough pillows and enough breakfasts. No; the world's appetite is diseased, and the subsequent drafts must be taken to shake the thirst created by the preceding drafts. Strong drink kindles the fires of thirst faster than it puts them out. There were three taverns. That which cursed that Italian village curses all Christendom today—too many taverns. There are streets in some of our cities where there are three or four taverns on every block—aye, where every other house is a tavern. You can take the Arabic numeral of my text, the three, and put on the right hand side of it one cipher and two ciphers and four ciphers, and that re-enforcement of numerals will not express the statistics of American rummies. Even if it were a good, healthy business, supplying necessity, an article superbly nutritious, it is a business mightily overdone, and there are three taverns where there ought to be only one.

The fact is, there are in another sense three taverns now—the gorgeous tavern for the affluent, the medium tavern for the working classes and the tavern of the slums—and they stand in line, and many people beginning with the first come down through the second and come out at the third. At the first of the three taverns the wines are of celebrated vintage, and the whiskies are said to be pure, and they are quaffed from cut glass at marble side tables, under pictures approaching masterpieces. The patrons pull off their kid gloves and hand their silk hats to the waiter and push back their hair with a hand on one finger of which is a cameo. But those patrons are apt to stop visiting that place. It is not the money that a man pays for drinks—for what are a few hundred or a few thousand dollars to a man of large income—but their brain gets touched, and that unbalances their judgment, and they can see fortunes in enterprises charged with disaster. In longer or shorter time they change taverns, and they come down to tavern the second, where the pictures are not quite so scrupulous of suggestion, and the small table is rougher, and the waiter standing on it is of German silver, and the air has been kept over from the night before, and that which they sip from the pewter mug has a larger percentage of benzene, ambergris, creosote, henbane, strychnine, prussic acid, cocculus indicus, plaster of paris, copperas and nightshade. The patron may be seen almost every day, and perhaps many times the same day, at this tavern the second, but he is preparing to graduate. Brain, liver, heart, nerves, are rapidly giving way. That tavern the second has its dismal echo in his business destroyed and family scattered and woes that choke one's vocabulary. Time passes on, and he enters tavern the third; a red light outside, a hiccoughing and belabored group inside. He will be dragged out of doors about 2 o'clock in the morning and left on the sidewalk, because the bartender wants to shut up. The poor victim has taken the regular course in the college of degradation. He has his diploma written on his swollen, bruised and blotched physiognomy. He is a regular graduate of the three taverns. As the police take him up and put him in the ambulance the wheels seem to rumble with two rolls of thunder, one of which says, "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it moveth itself aright in the cup, for at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." The other thunder roll says, "All drunkards shall have their place in the lake that burneth fire and with brimstone."

Temptation.

I am glad to find in this scene of the text that there is such a thing as declining successfully great tavernian temptations. I can see from what Paul said and did after he had traveled the following 17 miles of his journey that he had received no damage at the three taverns. How much he was tempted I know not. Do not suppose he was superior to temptation. That particular temptation has destroyed many of the grandest, mightiest, noblest statesmen, philosophers, heroes, clergymen, apostles of law and medicine and government and religion. Paul was not physically well under any circumstances. It was not in mock depreciation that he said he was "in bodily presence weak." It seems that his eyesight was so poor that he did his writing through an amanuensis, for he mentions it as something remarkable that his shortest epistle, the one to Philemon, was in his own penmanship, saying, "I, Paul, have written it with my own hand." He had been thrown from his horse, he had been stoned, he had been endmaged, he had had his nerves pulled on by preaching at Athens to the most scholarly audience of all the earth, and at Corinth to the most brilliantly profligate assembly and been howled upon by the Ephesian worshippers of Diana, tried for his life before Felix, charged by Festus with being insane, had crawled upon the beach, drenched in the shipwreck, and much of the time had an iron handcuff on his wrist, and if any man needed stimulus Paul needed it, but with all his physical exhaustion he got past the three taverns undamaged and stepped into Rome all ready for the tremendous ordeal to which he was subjected. Oh, how many mighty men, feeling that they must brace up after

extraordinary service and prepare themselves for other service, have called on the spirit of wine for inspiration, and in a few years have been sacrificed on the altar of a Moloch who sits on a throne of human carcasses. It would not be wise or kind or Christian to call their names in public, but you call them out of your own memory. Oh, how many splendid men could not get past the three taverns!

Notice that a profound mystery is attached to these Italian hostilities. No hotel register tells the names of those who stopped at those taverns, there is no old account book as to how many drank there, there is no broken chalice or jug to suggest what was the style of liquid which these customers consumed. So an awful mystery hangs about the barrooms of the modern taverns. Oh, if they would only keep a book upon the counter or a scroll that could be unrolled from the wall telling how many homesteads they have desolated and how many immortal souls they have blasted! You say that would spoil their business. Well, I suppose it would, but a business that cannot plainly tell its effect upon its customers is a business that ought to be spoiled. Ah, you mysterious barrooms, speak out and tell how many suicides went out from you to halter or pistol or knife or deadly leap from fourth story window; how many young men, started well in life, were halted by you and turned on the wrong road, dragging after them bleeding parental hearts; how many people who promised at the marriage altar fidelity until death did them part were brought by you to early and ghastly separation; how many madhouses have you filled with maniacs; how many graves have you dug and filled in the cemetery; how many ragged and hungry children have you beggared through the fathers whom you destroyed. If the skeletons of all those whom you have slain were piled up on top of each other, how high would the mountain be? If the tears of all the orphanage and widowhood that you have pressed out were gathered together, how wide would be the lake or how long the river? Ah, they make no answer. On this subject the modern taverns are as silent as the oriental three taverns, but there are millions of hearts that throb with most vehement condemnation, and many of them would go as far as the mother in Oxford, Mass., whose son had been long absent from home and was returning, and at the tavern on the way he was persuaded to drink, and that one drink aroused a former habit, and again and again he drank, and he was found the next morning dead in the barn of the tavern. The owner of the tavern who gave him the rum helped carry his body home, and his broken hearted mother, afterward telling about it, said: "It was wrong, but I cursed him. I did it. Heaven forgive him and me."

The Rock of Safety.

But what a glad time when the world comes to its last three taverns for the sale of intoxicants! Now there are so many of them that statistics are only a more or less accurate guess as to their number. We sit with half closed eyes and undisturbed nerves and hear that in 1872 in the United States there were 1,964 breweries, 4,349 distilleries and 171,669 retail dealers, and that possibly by this time these figures may be truthfully doubled. The fact is that these establishments are innumerable, and the discussion is always disheartening, and the impression is abroad that the plague is so mighty and universal it can never be cured, and the most of sermons on this subject close with the book of Lamentations and not with the book of Revelation. Excuse me from adopting any such infidel theory. The Bible reiterates it until there is no more power in inspiration to make it plainer that the earth is to be not half or three-quarters, but wholly redeemed. On that rock I take my triumphant stand and join in the chorus of hosannas.

One of the most advantageous movements in the right direction is taking this whole subject into the education of the young. On the same school desk with the grammar, the geography, the arithmetic, are books telling the lads and lasses of 10 and 12 and 15 years of age what are the physiological effects of strong drink, what it does with the tissue of the liver and the ventricles of the brain, and whereas other generations did not realize the evil until their own bodies were blasted we are to have a generation taught what the viper is before it stings them, what the hyena is before it rends them, how deep is the abyss before it swallows them. Oh, boards of education, teachers in schools, professors in colleges, legislatures and congresses, widen and augment that work, and you hasten the complete overthrow of this evil! It will go down. I have the word of Almighty God for that in the assured extinction of all sin. But shall we have a share in the universal victory? The liquor saloons will drop from the hundreds of thousands into the score of thousands, and then from the thousands into the hundreds, and then from the hundreds into the tens, and from the tens to three.

The first of these last three taverns will be where the educated and philosophic and the high up will take their dram, but that class, aware of the power of the example they have been setting, will turn their back upon the evil custom and be satisfied with the two natural beverages that God intended for the stimulus of the race—the Java coffee plantations furnishing the best of the one and the Chinese teafields the best of the other. And some day the barroom will be crowded with people at the vendue and the auctioneer's mallet will pound at the sale of all the appurtenances. The second of these last three taverns will take down its flaming sign and extinguish its red light and close its doors, for the working classes will have concluded to buy their own horses and furnish their own beautiful homes and replenish finely the wardrobe of their own wives and daughters instead of providing the distillers, the brewers and liquor sellers with wardrobes and mirrors and carriages. And the next

time that second tavern is opened it will be a drug store, or a bakery, or a dry goods establishment, or a school. Then there will be only one more of the three dissipating taverns left. I don't know in what country or city or neighborhood it will be, but look at it, for it is the very last. The last inebriate will have staggered up to its counter and put down his pennies for his dram. Its last horrible adulteration will be mixed and quaffed to eat out the vitals and inflame the brain. The last drunkard will have stumbled down its front steps. The last spasm of delirium tremens caused by it will be struggled through. The old rockery will be torn down, and with its demolition will close the long and awful reign of the mightiest of earth's abominations. The last of the dissipating three taverns of all the world will be as thoroughly blotted out as were the three taverns of my text.

Cheer For Reformers.

With these thoughts I cheer Christian reformers in their work, and what rejoicing on earth and heaven there will be over the consummation! Within a few days one of the greatest of the leaders in this cause went up to enshrinement. The world never had but one Neal Dow and may never have another. He has been an illumination to the century. The stand he took has directly and indirectly saved hundreds of thousands from drunkards' graves. Seeing the wharfs of Portland, Me., covered with casks of West Indian rum, nearly an acre of it at one time, and the city smoking with seven distilleries, he began the warfare against drunkenness more than half a century ago. The good he has done, the homes he has kept inviolate, the high moral sense with which he has infused ten generations, are a story that neither earth nor heaven can afford to let die. Derided, belittled, caricatured, maligned for a quarter of a century as few men have been, he has lived on until at his decease universal newspaperdom speaks his praise, and the eulogiums of his career on this side of the sea have been caught up by the cathedral organ sounding his requiem on the other. His whole life having been for God and the world's betterment, when at half past 3 o'clock in the afternoon of Oct. 2 he left his home on earth surrounded by loving ministries and entered the gates of his eternal residence, I think there was a most unusual welcome and salutation given him. Multitudes enter heaven only because of what Christ has done for them, the welcome not at all intensified because of anything they had done for him. But all heaven knew the story of that good man's life, and the beauty of his deathbed, where he said, "I long to be free." I think all the reformers of heaven came out to hail him in the departed legislator who made laws to restrain intemperance, the consecrated platform orators who thrilled the generations that are gone, with "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come." Albert Barnes and John B. Gough were there to greet him, and golden tongued patriarch Stephen H. Tyng was there, and John W. Hawkins, the founder of the much derided and gloriously useful "Washingtonian movement" was there, and John Stearns and Commodore Foote and Dr. Marsh and Governor Briggs and Eliphalet Nott, and my lovely friend Alfred Colquhoun, the Christian senator, and hundreds of those who labored for the overthrow of the drunkenness that yet curses the earth were there to meet him and escort him to his throne and shout at his coronation.

The Departed Neal Dow.

God let him live on for near a century to show what good habits and cheerfulness and faith in the final triumph of all that is good can do for a man in this world and to add to the number of those who would be on the other side to attend his entrance. But he will come back again. "Yes," say some of you, with Martha, about Lazarus to Jesus, "I know he will rise at the resurrection of the last day." Ah, I do not mean that. Ministering spirits are all the time coming and going between earth and heaven—the Bible teaches it—and do you suppose the old hero just ascended will not come down and help us in the battle that still goes on? He will. Into the hearts of discouraged reformers he will come to speak good cheer. When legislators are deciding how they can best stop the rum traffic of America by legal enactment, he will help them vote for the right and rise up undismayed from temporary defeat. In this battle will Neal Dow be until the last victory is gained and the smoke of the last distillery has curled on the air, and the last tear of despoiled homesteads shall be wiped away. O departed nonagenarian! After you have taken a good rest from your struggle of 70 active years come down again into the fight and bring with you a host of the old Christian warriors who once mingled in the fray.

In this battle the visible troops are not so mighty as the invisible. The gospel campaign began with the supernatural—the midnight chant that woke the shepherds, the hushed sea, the eyesight given where the patient had been without the optic nerve, the sun obliterated from the noonday heavens, the law of gravitation losing its grip as Christ ascended, and as the gospel campaign began with the supernatural, it will close with the supernatural, and the winds and the waves and the lightnings and the earthquakes will come in on the right side and against the wrong side, and our ascended champions will return whether the world sees them or does not see them. I do not think that those great souls departed are going to do nothing hereafter but sing psalms, and play harps, and breathe frankincense, and walk seas of glass mingled with fire. The mission they fulfilled while in the body will be eclipsed by their post mortem mission, with faculties quickened and velocities multiplied, and it may have been to that our dying reformer referred when he said, "I long to be free." There may be bigger worlds than this to be redeemed and more gigantic abominations to be

overthrown than this world ever saw, and the discipline got here may only be preliminary drill for a campaign in some other world and perhaps some other constellation. But the crowned heroes and heroines, because of their grander achievements in greater spheres, will not forget this old world where they prayed and suffered and triumphed. Church militant and church triumphant, but two divisions of the same army—right wing and left wing.

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After all is said about our duty to others, the fact remains that our first and greatest duty is to ourselves. The tree that does not grow, drawing its substance and strength from where it may, will never give shade to the wayfarer nor fruit to the hungry. It is well to help others, but it is presumption to offer to give what one has not. The blind cannot lead the blind. Too many of us are so anxious to be "doing something for the world" that we neglect the very necessary self culture that must precede all work for others.

What do the children drink? Don't give them tea or coffee. Have you tried the new food drink called Grain-O? It is delicious and nourishing and takes the place of coffee. The more Grain-O you give the children the more health you distribute through their systems. Grain-O is made of pure grains, and when properly prepared tastes like the choice grades of coffee but costs about 1/4 as much. All grocers sell it. 15c and 25c.

Jean Ingel ow came of a clever family and when she and her brothers and sisters were children they got up a little magazine of their own, the type being set by schoolfellows of her brothers at the house of their clergyman schoolmaster, who owned a small printing machine, says the *Woman's Journal*. As a child she used also to write poems on the inside of the shutters of her bedroom window, of all odd places, and, after they were one day accidentally discovered by her mother, some of them found their way into print. A peculiar feature about Miss Ingelov's life was that she never entered a theater and an equally remarkable one about herself was that she could remember events in her life from the time she was 17 months old.

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A young Irishman in want of a five-pound note wrote to his uncle as follows: "Dear Uncle—If you could see how I blush for shame while I am writing you would pity me. Do you know why? Because I have to ask you for a few pounds, and do not know how to express myself. It is impossible for me to tell you. I prefer to die. I send you this by messenger, who will wait for an answer. Believe me, my dear uncle, your most obedient nephew,— P. S. Overcome with shame for what I have written, I have been running after the messenger in order to take the letter from him, but I cannot catch him. Heaven grant that something may happen to stop him, or that my letter may get lost." The uncle was naturally touched, but was equal to the emergency. He replied as follows: "My dear Jack—Console yourself, and blush no longer. Providence has heard your prayers. The messenger lost your letter. Your affectionate uncle,—"

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